

## Oral history with 72 year old white female, Quicksand, Kentucky (Transcription)

The next excerpt is taken from original tape W116. Begin M22 B(4)

Q: Have you lived here all your life?

R: I lived up here at the mouth of ( ) Branch. That's where I was born, up there, you see. ( ). But I have lived here for, nearly since 1922. I lived about 6 years on ( ), and then I lived here all the rest of my life.

Q: What is your maiden name?

R: Well, now, have you already got it on? Well, my maiden name was ( ). And my Daddy and Mother's name was <unintelligible text> ( ) and her name was ( ). They called her ( ). <unintelligible text> was her name, and she was a <unintelligible text> before she was married. And they come originally from ( ) County. And I had had a little brother borned over there, and he died he was two years old. And he had the measles, he was borned with the measles. And so...

Q: I guess it was pretty serious back then when somebody got something like the measles, they ...<gap> <unintelligible text>

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R: She, yeah, she had had the measles, you see, before the child was borned, and so when it was borned it just broke out of the measles and his name was Charlie when he died. Lived about a hour. So my mother, she had 12 children. But I do remember then at the time she just had four children when my little sister died. Her name was Rebecca and she was five years old. And she died with a ( ) disease. See, there wasn't too many doctors around and about, them days.

Q: How many did they have? Do you remember?

R: Doctors?

Q: Yeah.

R: I remember one was in Jackson Way, his name <unintelligible text>. And <unintelligible text>. Called him. <unintelligible text>. But my father and my mother and I lived up here on the <unintelligible text>'s farm here, very near the <unintelligible text> cemetery. ( ) <unintelligible text> farm. And they was a great big log house there. Great big long logs there, you know, you could pop their logs and they'd ( ), you see, and they'd lay up a big house and they's a great big room. And in this big room they could, they didn't have living rooms in them days. And that room, you could put up six beds. And there's a upstairs to it. Upstairs you could put the same up there and it had the kitchen and the dining room and then over on this other side.

Q: That's quite large!

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R: And it had another room back out here. And that's where I was borned, there at that place on February the first in 1900. And so in them days then they just had midwives, when the children

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was borned. They didn't go to a doctor. They couldn't have got one if they's wanted to. They wasn't nothing but county roads, and they got impossible in the winter. You couldn't travel them. And so that night then, my daddy, when she began to get in labor, my mother, they've told me all about it, he had to come clear down here to Quicksand for to get a midwife. And that was nine miles.

Q: Oh, goodness. And did he make it?

R: Well, now he didn't make it in time. So he stopped and got my <unintelligible text> to tell her to come on up, you know, to watch after my mother. And, well, she was my daddy's sister. And she came on up there, and she had such a cold time. It was the coldest time there ever was, and he started on that old gray mare, and they said you could hear their feet a'cracking two or three miles away. The ground was froze solid, you see, the road, so she put my mother in the bed and put her down with her shoes on, it was so cold. And her stockings on. And she had such a labor that I was borned, you know, in a little while! She says to <unintelligible text>, she says, take the cover down and see what she's a doing. And well, <unintelligible text> says, she's just a-sucking on her fist. (laughter) So you know I never did forget that. And I told (laughter) that awhile back down there to Doctor ( ), and he laughed so hard I couldn't tell it all. He laughed so much about that he couldn't ( ) it all. Well, now then, we went on in, and so like I said, they had their family there and my

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brothers and I and right now I've got three sisters, there are three of us sisters are living and three

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brothers are living yet.

Q: Are they located in this area?

R: Now <unintelligible text>, now that's my brother, he lives over here on ( ) place. And he's 89 years old and is turning ninety this month. And my other sister then, she got married ( ), and she married a man who just had one leg ( ). And he just couldn't work and do too much, you know, to make a living ( ). ( )nobody could, and she was sorry for him, and she'd climb on the hill to get the ( ),you know.( ) had three children, and she got herself all wet in the weeds and everthing, and took quick TB and died. When she was 30 years old.

Q; Oh my goodness!

R: So, and then one of my other sisters died out in Dayton, Ohio. Her name was <unintelligible text> She had married ( ), and she passed away. They buried her out there. I made it out to her funeral.( ). <unintelligible text> is her name. ( ) married <unintelligible text> up here in Quicksand. And she's one of them. ( ). They all live up here that's living, except <unintelligible text>. They made their own-made soap. They had to wash on rubbing boards, and we had us two tubs all of the time, me and my sister get out one of them rub boards, you know, and just fill them tubs with water and we made our soap and ...

Q: What type of process is it, making soap?

R: Well, you take some lye. When they first begin to make it way back, they didn't have much ( ) lye like you can get a can now. And they just put some barrels and they filled them

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up with ashes that come out of the fireplace and made a little round hole in the top and there they'd, the water kept pouring on down yonder and in through to a trough. And that made lye, you know. And they'd put that in with the grease then and boil it. But the soap was more like jelly. They had to put, that in a can or something, too. And that's what we'd wash. We'd just set us a can of soap right by our tub, you know. And oh, how clean they'd get! We'd wash them through two waters, and boil them and then they made their own baby starch. They made it out of flour. And measured it kindly, you know, and we strained that, and we put a little sugar in that starch and a little lard in it, and that was the finest starch you ever saw! And they still had iron, the old time irons. Had to heat them on the stove, you know, and on the fire place. (laughter, phone ringing) And we would iron with them. And my mother had a big spinning wheel, and it was home made. My sister has got it now. It's over a hundred years old. And she had cards, and she'd, we had sheep, you know, and just card that wool and spin it, and taught us to do it too. And she raised cotton, besides. She'd plant her cotton to raise it. And make thread, and oh, we'd fix us two big pair of yarn stockings every winter, come way up here, two pair a piece, us girls. That's what we wore, well the dresses went way down here, you know, big, long dresses.

Q: You made all your own clothes?

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R: Yeah, all of them you know. And see that's just the way old times was. And a lot of people, my children don't believe

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it was that a way, but it's the truth!

Q: Oh, it's fabulous. People don't appreciate what they have because they ...

R: But you know we live bad and we live good. But during this time, when I was about two years old, my <unintelligible text>, that was my mother's daddy, he lived a little piece up above us. There on another <unintelligible text> farm. And I remember when I was two years old, and <unintelligible text> my brother, was the baby, my daddy carried me on his back, and my mother carried me in her arms, and I was about two years old, you see, and so we went up there and carried a pine light. Lit a big pine stick and made a light. And went up there and put on a sideshow. There was a man who'd come through the country called <unintelligible text>. (laughter) That was his name, you know. And he put on what you call a sideshow. And of course, you know it wasn't much, but people thought a lot of it. They didn't know. They hadn't saw anything.

Q: What did he do?

R: Pulled a rabbit out of a hat, or swallow a butcher knife, or one thing or another like that, you know. Just a magic, is what it was.

Q; Did he charge any money to come watch him?

R: No, he didn't. He wasn't charging anything. 'Cause there wasn't any money in the country. And my Uncle Lee Jordan, that was my mother's brother, he struck up with that show, and he followed off with it, and he could just do a lot of tricks. And he'd come back. He stayed a whole lot with my mother because he was the baby one. He stayed a whole lot with her. And he'd

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go over to the river and he'd catch some 4 or 5, 8 bullfrogs, and he'd bring them up in the yard and set them down. And he'd take him a little ( ) switch, and he'd whip them frogs till they cried just like babies. (laughter) And my mother would get ahold of a stick and she'd just run him all over the place. And he'd take a big long black snake by the tail and he'd swing it like a whip and swing its head off. And you know ain't nobody can do that thee days. No they sure can't. (laughter)

Q: That was some kind of entertainment, wasn't it?

R: Oh, I'll tell you. And we lived close to the graveyard up there, but like I told you, honey, I remember when my little sister of five years old died. Now ( ), she died of the typhoid fever. They didn't have undertakers, and-they made their coffins, you know, and everything like that.

END OF SIDE A

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### SIDE B

We continue with this excerpt from original tape W 116.

R: We lived close to the graveyard up there. But like I told you honey, I remember when my little sister of five year old died. Now Georgia, she died with the typhoid fever. They didn't have undertakers in them days, and they made their coffins, you know, and everything like that, and ...

Q: What did they make them out of?

R: Ah, just lumber, just take lumber and make their coffins out of them. And take them to bury them. She was eleven years old when she died. She could help cook, and begin to cook a little. She was older than me, you see. And she died of the typhoid fever. In them days they starved you. They starved you forty days with the typhoid before you got over it. And you couldn't eat a bite of nothing, just drink a little milk, something like that, you know. And water in you. Then when you did go to eat and you couldn't hardly eat.

Q: Did people recover from it by doing that?

R: Yes. Sometimes they would. My daddy has had it twice and come out of it. But I don't know how they did. They just starved them to death, and they don't do that these days, see. And so she died, and they couldn't close her eyes because she had fell away and got bored and everything. And this other little sister I told you about, I remember her dying, too. And she died with the ( ) disease. She did died about three weeks after my sister



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Georgia. Georgia was the first of the ( ) that died. And she had the ( ) disease, and you just ( )

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and they just couldn't do nothing about it. These days they ain't no cure for it. And I remember when they put her in her coffin, honey, that they, she had a little doll she played with, and it was hanging on the wall, and my daddy took it down and put it in her coffin. And I never did forget it. And I like to talk about the history and my life story, but it all comes back to me. So, well then Ma passed on to dead, and you see like I said, they, the way they got their goods up to Quicksand, groceries and dry goods, they took a freight boat. Great old big freight boat, and it took six men to push that. That's six over here or twelve men. Six over here. And it took them a steerman. That was <unintelligible text>, was a big old freight boat. He freighted his goods up there. And sometimes they'd have to stop you. You see you was starting from Jackson and get your wholesale ( ), and go up there they would, and put their stores up. They'd have to stop and stay overnight on the way before they could get up there. They had rest. It was hard, you see! 'Cause their loads was impossible. You couldn't hardly take a wagon and over them. That's all you could ever take over them. Can't ride a horse, they walk. And the way they kept their ( ) loads up, they let each man, they'd lay him a ( ), and he wasn't ready to work and the rest did, why they just would lay him off so much, like a steak you know, and they'd go work that. Just some shovels and maddox and things. Maybe they'd be a few rocks in the road, you see. So that's the way they lived. And they had the big water mill. <unintelligible text> did at ( ) Creek. And we'd go to mill,